(c) by when the benefit of rebate on these taxes would be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Steps to curb inflation

2415. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the rate of inflation as on 31 st March, for the last three years;

(b) whether the prices of essential commodities like cereals, pulses, edible oils and vegetables continues to soar due to inflation and as a result general public are severely affected;

(c) if so, the details of increase in prices of these commoditie along with the percentage of increase during the last three years, commodity-wise; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to contain price rise of these essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The inflation measured in terms of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for all commodities and essential commodities like cereals, pulses, edible oils and vegetables are indicated in Table I.

Table I: Year-on-year inflation rates in March (%)

Average of weeks	All commodities	Cereals	Pulses	Vegetables	Edible oils
March, 2006	3.9	5.6	28.7	4.9	-3.5
March, 2007	6.6	7.4	15.3	25.1	**13.8**
March, 2008 P	6.4	6.3	-3.0	9.2	**18.7**

P: Provisional

Containment of inflation remains high on the agenda of the Government. Anti-inflationary policies of the Government include strict fiscal discipline, rationalization of duties of essential items, effective supply-demand management of essential commodities through liberal tariff and trade policies and procurement by public agencies. The Monetary policy of Reserve Bank of India, while being conducive to economic growth, has also attempted to contain inflationary expectations arising out of uncertainties in domestic and international environment.

Merging of ICICI bank with foreign company

†2416. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ICICI Bank has been merged with any foreign company;

(b) the percentage of Bank's share after the merger;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.